

I am pleased that so many people continue to choose North Carolina as a place to live, work, raise a family, start a business, and retire. But this growth comes with its own set of challenges, particularly with respect to our transportation systems and other critical infrastructure. If we are going to maintain our high quality of life, we must ensure that our investments in transportation and infrastructure are keeping pace with rapid growth.

First and foremost, we must maintain our roads, highways and interstates, and bridges, which are critical to our economic prosperity as well as our quality of life. As a Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over transportation, housing, and community development, I have worked to maintain and expand federal investments in basic transportation infrastructure, [which have fallen well short of what is needed in recent years](#). I have also worked to ensure that North Carolina's needs are met in the the five-year surface transportation bill, which is currently overdue for reauthorization.

But new and widened roads alone cannot solve the traffic congestion and other problems that have become a part of daily life for many Triangle residents. I am a strong supporter of "smart growth" development, which emphasizes greater coordination of housing, public transportation, and economic development plans at the local level, as well as an advocate for a "complete streets" policy that improves transportation options for all users – including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, older persons, individuals with disabilities, and motorists. I have worked with local leaders to advance a plan for expanded bus and regional rail, and have also helped lead the fight in Congress to expand and improve high-speed rail in critical corridors, including the Southeast. We simply must develop a true multi-modal transportation strategy in order to keep pace with our community's needs.

As your Representative, I will continue working with my colleagues to advance legislation that works to address our transportation challenges. As Congress debates these important issues, I hope you will keep in touch with your views.

- [U.S. Department of Transportation Grants](#)
- [North Carolina Department of Transportation](#)
- [Triangle Transit](#)
- [Recovery Act Transportation Projects in North Carolina](#)
- [Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Website](#)

{mooblock=Roads and Highways}

Congress has started work on the next five-year transportation authorization bill to replace our current surface transportation bill (known as SAFETEA-LU). A new transportation bill must address many difficult issues, including a long-term solution for the way that we fund road construction projects to replace or augment the current gasoline tax.

Many in the transportation community are urging Congress to act quickly to address the nation's transportation system, and related efforts are [currently underway in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee](#). While I agree that we must move forward with a new multi-year transportation bill, in light of recent Republican proposals to slash key investments in roads and bridges and rescind billions for high-speed rail, it will be a real battle to produce a bill that adequately funds our transportation needs. I will be working to ensure that the new surface transportation bill, as well as our annual transportation appropriations bills, include the investments we need to meet the challenges we in our region and state.

The vast majority of federal highway and transit funding is distributed directly to states, local governments and transportation authorities by formulas, with projects selected at the state or local level. The [North Carolina Department of Transportation \(NCDOT\)](#) has developed a strategic plan for project decision-making that focuses on the long-term goals of safety, mobility, and infrastructure health. The state's process for allocating transportation funding begins with a thirty-year Statewide Long-Range Plan (the "2040 Plan") and the Program and Resource Plan, and ends with a five-year Work Program. For information on state and local projects, please [visit the NCDOT website](#).

For information on your driver license and vehicle registration, you can visit the state's [Division of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#).

- [CRS report: Surface transportation](#)

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{mooblock=Public Transportation}

Public transportation is critical not only for reducing traffic congestion but also for economic development, job creation, and environmental protection. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I have worked to secure federal funding for local road improvement and construction projects and other initiatives designed to expand access to transportation alternatives in our area.

Although local public transit decisions – including the selection of bus routes – are made by local officials, I have helped secure federal funding for statewide upgrades in bus equipment, service, and facilities. For example, I worked with community leaders and federal officials to obtain new and refurbished buses and to build new facilities in Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh that facilitate improved maintenance and accommodate intermodal transportation options. Such facilities are the wave of the future – an American future that includes revitalized downtowns, increased mobility for people wherever they live and work, reduced traffic congestion and cleaner air, and balanced public policy that brings all levels of government together in support of diverse modes of transportation.

I have also been actively engaged at the federal level as local governments develop a blueprint for a regional transit system. Our region's municipalities and the [Triangle Transit Authority](#) have developed a newly revised strategy for expanded public transportation in the Triangle area that includes enhanced and expanded bus service throughout the region along with the introduction of light rail options. As the Triangle continues to develop these proposals, you can follow progress at www.ourtransitfuture.com. I look forward to working with stakeholders at the state and federal level to implement this plan.

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{mooblock=Intercity Passenger and High Speed Rail}

As a co-chair of the new bipartisan Congressional Bicameral High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus, I have been a strong supporter of high-speed and intercity passenger rail service and infrastructure. Amtrak is the major provider of rail service in the United States, currently serving more than 500 destinations in forty-six states and providing thousands of jobs to middle-class American workers. With Amtrak ridership at an all-time high, now is not the time to eliminate investments in our nation's transportation network.

High-speed rail will also play an essential role in our nation's transportation future, boosting our economy by providing a means to move goods and people from one place to another faster and more efficiently—precisely the reason our international competitors have placed an emphasis on this technology. We should never fall behind countries like China when it comes to investing in the infrastructure that will power our twenty-first century economy. North Carolina has been a leader in helping to develop the Southeast High-Speed Rail (SEHSR) corridor from Washington, D.C. to Charlotte, and was recently awarded a major grant for the development of a high-speed service between Raleigh and Charlotte. These improvements are already paying dividends for our state's freight and passenger operations – not to mention our economic recovery.

- [Southeast High Speed Rail](#)
- [Rail projects and development in North Carolina](#)
- [Information on Amtrak rail service in North Carolina](#)

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{mooblock=Aviation}

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has primary responsibility over civil aviation in the United States. Its activities include safety regulation, air traffic management, commercial space transportation, research, and navigation facilities. As the representative of a region that depends on national and international air travel for its economic success, I understand the need to improve and modernize our aviation system in order to maintain our leadership in the world. Investments in our air space system ([NextGen](#)) will also lead to economic and job growth for our nation's airlines and aviation companies and suppliers.

As the Ranking Member on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, which has funding responsibility for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), I will also continue working to improve the passenger experience and ensure aviation travel safety. You can find out more about my efforts in this area on my [Homeland Security and First Responders page](#)

- [CRS report: Federal aviation](#)
- The fourth district is served by the Raleigh-Durham International Airport. For airport information, visit: <http://www.rdu.com/>

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{mooblock=Smart Growth}

Reconciling the competing demands of economic development with those of responsible environmental stewardship and resource management is a particular challenge in high-growth areas like the Triangle. In order to maintain and improve our quality of life in the midst of robust expansion and development, we need to undertake a coordinated regional planning effort that meets our infrastructure needs while preserving livability and sustainability. We must promote not just growth, but smart growth.

As a Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over transportation, housing, and community development, I have been a steady advocate for a "complete streets" policy that improves transportation options for all users – including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, older persons, individuals with disabilities, and motorists. I have also consistently supported programs that help stretch our transportation dollars so that they accomplish multiple objectives simultaneously, such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program, which provides flexible funds to states for transportation projects that reduce traffic congestion and help states meet Clean Air Act requirements; Transportation Enhancements (TE), which improves transportation options for all users; the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities; and Safe Routes to School (SRTS), which empowers communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity.

Furthermore, I support the Obama Administration's efforts to promote sustainability through the [Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#)

. With relatively modest funding and demand far outpacing the available funds, our federal agencies have worked effectively with communities to decrease red tape, ensure government coordination, and fund projects supported by multiple stakeholders. This partnership exemplifies the type of effective government program that can coordinate government spending to help communities implement projects quickly.

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